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PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION OF HUMAN FACTORS IN FOREST FIRES

A Study Conducted under the Direction of
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for
The Division of Forest Fire Research
Southern Forest Experiment Station
United States Department of Agriculture
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Foreword

The reader of this report should bear in mind that it does not represent research in the usual use of that term. Rather, it is a report of some of the information gathered during the preparation for research to be conducted in the future. The principal purpose of the current study was to allow certain individuals to develop the necessary techniques and gain a feeling for the problems to be investigated.

It is hoped that this report will help to focus attention on some of the problems that are susceptible to investigation in the future.

No names have been used in the report, although in many cases certain individuals were repeatedly mentioned and given praise in some instances and condemnation in others.

SECTION I

A. INTRODUCTION

The study to be described in this report is purely exploratory in nature. The main purpose of the study was to develop and try out techniques of eliciting reliable and valid information from forest residents as a preliminary to a series of studies designed to study certain factors believed to be connected with the incidence of forest fires.

In order to secure information from the residents, it was believed that some type of interview would be necessary. Previous experience of the investigators with mailed questionnaires in Mississippi led to the prediction that the number of returns under such a procedure would be very low. Two types of interviews were tried during the study, the standardized and the informal. A few attempts were made at depth interviewing by the principal investigator but were relatively unsuccessful due to the lack of cooperation of the respondents.

The Standardized Interview

In all respects except one the standardized interview was judged to yield the most reliable and valid information. This type of interview makes use of predetermined questions that are asked in a certain set order. The responses of the interviewee are recorded during the interview, and the results are easy to score and evaluate. This type of interview is easily recorded for machine data processing.

Interviewers with very little training were able to use the standardized form with success and reported that they had much more confidence in the process than when they were attempting the more difficult informal interview. Some of the information to be reported in subsequent parts of this report was obtained through the use of standardized interviews, but none of the information pertaining

directly to forest fires was so obtained.

The standardized interview has one inherent weakness for the types of studies planned. Its main weakness is that it cannot be varied to follow interesting leads, nor is it likely to induce the person being interviewed to "open up" and reveal much about himself or any new information. A further weakness of this type of interview was that among a significant number of people the procedure of asking specific questions and publicly recording answers seemed to be objectionable when certain subjects were introduced. Several interviewees who were cooperative when asked the standardized questions designed to secure background information became uncooperative when the subject of forest fires and/or incendiarism was broached. The investigators became convinced early in the study that little useful information concerning forest fires would be gained from a significant proportion of the population if the standardized interview were the only instrument used.

The Informal Interview

The informal interview has the advantage of being less artificial than the standardized interview and is more easily varied to meet the demands of each individual situation. Skillfully handled by an experienced interviewer, the informal interview can be conducted in such a manner that the interviewee does not realize that anything beyond a mere conversation is taking place. Obviously, to interview a person without his being aware of it makes it necessary to record his responses in secrecy or at some time subsequent to the actual interview. The latter procedure often leads to inaccuracies, as much of what is recorded is dependent upon the interviewer's memory if the number of questions is more than a bare minimum.

The informal interview also has the disadvantage of requiring a much more highly trained and skillful individual as interviewer. The ability to guide the "conversation" into the necessary channels to make natural openings for the desired questions requires practice.

The interviewers used in this study received the minimum of instruction in the technique and got their practice in the field. This system of training is not to be recommended but was made necessary by the amount of time available (all interviewers except the principal investigator were students).

Interviews in this Study

Both of the foregoing types of interviews were given trials. The highly structured standardized interview appeared to all interviewers to be the superior method except for questions that dealt with the subject of forest fires. The interviewers also felt that much was to be gained through the informal procedure, but all stated that they felt inadequate to do a really competent piece of work using this technique.

To attempt to take advantage of the best aspects of each method, a procedure was devised whereby the early part of the interview was of a standardized nature and the informal part was used toward the end of the interview or when the respondent brought up the subject of forest fires. The interviewers believed that they were successful in using this technique.

In a few cases the principal investigator administered the standardized interview first to obtain background information and then, to secure information concerning fires, began an informal type interview. Although this system should be tested further, it appeared to be highly successful and gave the informal interview the appearance of mere conversation that followed the apparent interview. It is believed that this procedure may in the long run prove to be the most fruitful.

B. PROCEDURE

The main part of the investigation was conducted during the last half of the summer of 1957. The principal focus of the study was centered in DeSoto National Forest, but some additional work was done in surrounding areas. Although the greatest proportion of the work was on federally-protected lands, some information was gathered from state-protected areas for purposes of comparison.

At the beginning of the study, all the investigators were naive to both the problem of incendiarism and to the current knowledge that members of the Forest Service had concerning it. This naivete was maintained by choice during the pre-investigation conferences with various Forest Service officials, as the investigators believed that it would be better to approach the study with no previously formed prejudices.

It was because of this desire to remain unprejudiced and the plan to keep the investigation from being identified with the Forest Service that the series of background meetings between investigators and Forest Service personnel were terminated and little or no contact was made with foresters in the various districts. It should be mentioned, however, that all Forest Service personnel called upon displayed an admirable spirit of cooperation even when they were obviously unconvinced of any value the study might have.

Extent of the Study

A total of 389 interviews, involving 503 people, was conducted. Approximately 2800 miles were driven in conducting and supervising interviews. An average of about five interviews per day per man were made during the study. The people interviewed represent a haphazard sample of the forest residents. The original design of the study called

for a random sample based upon the location of houses. It soon became apparent, however, that to attempt to interview only those occupants of houses chosen by use of a table of random numbers would be prohibitive in terms of time and money. The random sampling design was found to be unworkable due to the large number of houses encountered at which no occupants were at home. In such cases, the investigator continued to the next house and the next on the road until a house with an occupant was encountered. The fact that many of the interviews were conducted in this manner may cause the results to be biased.

Every attempt was made to interview men rather than women. The final ratio was approximately eight men to each woman. The rationale for this decision was based upon the belief that the male members of the family would be more likely to have knowledge of the facts sought and, since the interviewers were all males, would be the easier sex with which to establish rapport.

Not all questions were responded to by the interviewees; therefore, the number of persons involved will differ slightly from question to question.

Interview Procedure

The more or less standardized procedure that soon developed consisted of an introduction, a statement that the investigator was an employee of the University of Mississippi (an identification card was available to be shown if requested), and a statement that the University was interested in the problems of farmers in general and in the conditions in and around national forest areas in particular. The interviewee was assured that he would not be identified with any statement that he might make and that his name would not be recorded in any way. This last provision was strictly adhered to at all times.

After a reasonable degree of rapport had been established and the background questions administered systematically, the question of forest fires was brought up by the interviewer if it was not mentioned in the normal development of the interview. After forest fires in general were discussed, the possibility of an incendiary origin was discussed. It is interesting to note that in approximately one-third of the cases it was necessary for the interviewer to introduce the subject of fires that were started by means other than accident. However, only two of the people interviewed stated that they did not believe that any fires were purposely set.

In most cases the interviewer was successful in introducing the informal questions in such a manner that the interviewee would not realize that a questionnaire was being administered. In addition to the standard series of questions, follow-up questions were asked, but these, of course, were not always the same since the direction they took was dependent upon the various answers given by respondents.

The results were recorded in most cases after the interviewer had returned to his car, although at times it was possible to take notes during the interview. This latter procedure was used only when the interviewee appeared extremely cooperative and made no objection when the note taking began.

C. RESULTS

Although the primary purpose of the study was to gain experience in working with forest residents and to develop procedures and techniques, some information that may be of interest was recorded. The information to be presented in this and following sections should always be interpreted with caution as it was gathered during an experimental period.

For cross-tabulation purposes it was easier to study responses in an order other than that in which they were received during the interviews. The order in which the following information is presented is not indicative of the order in which questions were asked.

The first question to be analyzed was restricted to individuals who had been residents of their immediate area for eight or more years. These individuals were asked for their opinion of the manner in which relations, or "getting along," with the Forest Service had changed in the past eight years. The question was asked in terms of the population as a whole and not in terms of the individual's personal reaction.

The results were as follows:

	Biloxi R.D. N=82	Black Creek N=78	Leaf River N=74
Improved	48.8%	21.7%	20.3%
About same	18.3%	46.2%	50.0%
Worse	25.6%	24.4%	21.6%
No opinion or don't know	7.3%	7.7%	8.1%

Of the total group to which the question was posed, over two-thirds (68.3%) thought that relations either were about the same or were improving. The percentage of the total interviewed that indicated relationships were improving was almost one-third (30.8%). This figure may be contrasted with the 23.5% who stated that they believed the relationship between residents and the Service was getting worse. This last percentage should be interpreted with caution, however, as several interviewees who were placed in this category were those who were subsequently found to be hypercritical of the Forest Service and anything they considered remotely connected with it. These individuals made statements in answer to the question such as, "Worse and worse; always has been bad and ain't ever going to get any better"; "Lousy; I've hated them since I've knowed them, and they just keep gettin'

meaner all the time"; etc. Several responses of this type were elicited and, while one might be justified in placing replies of this type among those who thought conditions were about the same, it was thought better to place them in the more unfavorable category as this was more reflective of the content of their remarks. This decision was made because the great majority of those in the "about the same" category phrased their remarks in such a way as to indicate that relationships were fairly satisfactory or at least of such a nature as not to create an active dislike.

To those who indicated that relationships had improved over the past eight years an additional question was addressed. They were asked to indicate what in their opinion was responsible for the improved relations. The replies that were frequently given are shown below separately for each ranger district. The categorizations represent general headings under which the remarks could be classified.

Biloxi Ranger District	Number of Replies
(1) People know and understand more about the Service now	19
(2) People are learning the value of forests	12
(3) The present ranger	12
(4) Good times in general	5
(5) Various other reasons	2

Black Creek Ranger District	
(1) People know and understand more about the Service now	7
(2) People are learning the value of forests	4
(3) Good times in general	2
(4) Various other reasons	4

Leaf River Ranger District	
(1) People know and understand more about the Service now	5
(2) People are learning the value of forests	6
(3) Various other reasons	4

For the forest as a whole the most frequent response given as a reason for improved relations with the Forest Service is the fact that the residents are gaining more knowledge and understanding of the purposes and functions of the Forest Service. When asked how this increased knowledge was being disseminated among forest residents, very few of the respondents were able to give specific answers. However, some did mention programs presented before certain gatherings, school instruction, and, in a few cases, radio programs. The most frequently mentioned reason was that people learn about the Service through working for and with the Service in part-time jobs. Several of the residents of one district gave specific credit to the ranger in charge of that district as the one most important source of educational information.

The second most mentioned reason given by these long-time residents was the increased knowledge people have concerning the value of the forests. Their explanations of the manner in which this increased knowledge was gained were as vague as those in the previously discussed group. Virtually the same reasons were given by these respondents, but one additional one--that of having sold timber personally--was mentioned by a few.

One response was unique to the Biloxi District. In this area eight people, representing 20 per cent of the respondents, mentioned the ranger for that District as the most important reason for the improved acceptance of the Forest Service. An additional four mentioned him in connection with one of the other tabulated reasons; double responses were recorded in such cases, producing 50 responses although only 40 people were interviewed. In this same District the ranger was identified as the source of the increased knowledge and understanding of the residents. It is worth mentioning at the present that this ranger appeared to be much better known than did the rangers in any of the other districts, with the possible exception of the

Chickasawhay ranger. The residents usually stated that the Biloxi District ranger had been "with us" for a long time, that he had made friends of people that had disliked him for the first few years, and that he was a "good Joe." They also ascribed to him great knowledge of the area and an almost superhuman knowledge of "everything that's going on." A frequently made statement was, "He's lived here long enough to get to know us and for us to know him."

The category "Various other reasons" was composed of incidents that were mostly of a personal nature. They usually involved the interviewee mentioning some particular instance that resulted in his feeling as he did. These responses ranged from "being helped out of a ditch" to "being given free trees to plant."

The nearly one-fourth of the residents who said that they believed relationships were deteriorating were usually quite eager to state the reasons. However, the reasons that they gave were of a very diverse nature, and no meaningful classification scheme could be devised that would provide a useful tabulation. Subsequent questioning of these individuals usually elicited information about incidents that had involved that individual and some member of the Forest Service. The incidents were usually of an unpleasant nature and involved some alleged violation by the Forest Service of the individual's "rights." In many cases it became apparent to the interviewer that the interviewee was not attempting to estimate how the general populace felt but was expressing his personal feeling or was projecting his feelings to the whole population. Few differences among the various districts were noted, although those in the Biloxi District did mention the unavailability of land for purchase held by the government more often than did residents of other districts. Other incidents involved the taking up of livestock and alleged unfairness of employment practices in all districts. A more complete

discussion of the dissatisfaction of the residents will be given in the section of this report dealing with all interviewees. One complaint that was seldom mentioned during the early part of the study grew in frequency as the study progressed. This complaint involved a "fence law" that was identified by the residents as being sponsored by or connected with the Forest Service.

In addition to the foregoing questions, all questions posed to other interviewees were also posed to these residents. The responses received will be presented in the following section, which deals with attitudes and opinions of the forest residents in general. In addition to trying to get some basic attitudinal information, certain other information regarding each interviewee was also obtained whenever possible. All the information sought was not available for some individuals, as some interviewees appeared reluctant to discuss some of the topics. In a later part of the report, the information obtained will be related to certain attitudes and opinions held by the forest residents.

A definite attempt was made to secure as much attitudinal and basic information as possible before any discussion of fires was undertaken. The rationale for this procedure was that it was believed best to secure as much information as possible before any subject was broached that might engender emotion or cause the interviewee to become unresponsive. Subsequent experience proved this idea to be a sound one, as several individuals became uncooperative and at times truculent when the subject of man-caused fires was brought up.

SECTION II

ATTITUDES TOWARD FOREST SERVICE

One of the objectives of the study was to attempt to identify some variables that might be associated with the attitudes of the forest residents toward the Forest Service in general and incendiary fires in particular. The same general method and technique were used in securing this information as were described in Section I. However, all residents that time and conditions permitted were interviewed with no restriction imposed as to length of residence.

All questions were not asked of all interviewees. Some questions were omitted because of the difficulty of introducing the question in a diplomatic manner. In several cases it became obvious to the interviewer from responses given to the preliminary questions or from information given voluntarily by the interviewee that certain topics or questions should be omitted in the interest of securing further cooperation from the interviewee. The loss of information due to situations such as the foregoing was not serious as questions were lost for this reason in less than five per cent of the cases.

Another source of omitted questions was the faulty memory of the interviewer. In an effort to keep part of the interview informal in nature, it was not desirable to read the questions from a printed list, and thus the questions had to be committed to memory. In situations in which the usual order of questions could not be used, the interviewer sometimes failed to return to omitted questions.

The major reason for differences among the questions asked residents was the exploratory nature of the investigation. The interviewers started the study with only the most general of questions. As the study progressed,

certain information began to emerge that seemed to be of promise, and, therefore, questions designed to elicit more of this type of information were incorporated in the interviews. The information gained from these questions will be reported for what they are worth, but it should be remembered that they do not represent random samples of the forest residents. The fact that these questions were not part of a standardized interview accounts for the fact that in many cases the number of interviewee's responses is quite small.

"What do you think of the Forest Service in general?"

The first general question posed to the residents dealt with the general attitudes of the people toward the Forest Service. The question was usually phrased, "What do you think of the Forest Service in general?" Of 503 people asked this question, 64 (12.7%) either stated that they had no opinion or, in the case of four residents, denied that they knew there was a Forest Service.

The 439 interviewees who responded positively to this question did so in a large variety of statements. These statements were classified independently by three readers into three classes: (1) statements that could be called favorable to the Forest Service; (2) those that were neutral in nature; and (3) those that were definitely unfavorable. A great majority of the statements were of such a nature that they were easily classified, and all three readers agreed on approximately 86 per cent of the classifications. When disagreement as to classification was found, the statement was usually discussed by all three readers in conference and agreement of its proper placement reached. In those cases in which no agreement could be reached, the statements were placed in the neutral category.

The result of the analysis was as follows:

	Biloxi R.D. (N = 152)		Black Creek (N = 146)		Leaf River (N = 141)	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Favorable	88	57.9	74	50.7	70	49.6
Neutral	47	30.9	40	27.4	41	29.1
Unfavorable	17	11.2	32	21.9	30	21.3

There was apparently little difference between the various districts on this question. There was substantial agreement among the residents of all three districts in the type of statement that was made. No greater enthusiasm nor bitterness was evidenced toward the Service in any district than was found in the others.

There are several interesting aspects of the responses made to this question. A greater majority of the long-time residents of the area (reported and defined in Section I) responded favorably about the Service than did the population in general. In fact, even a sizable percentage (15.2%) of those who stated that relations between the general population and the Forest Service were deteriorating still gave favorable opinions of the Service as their personal reactions. However, it was also noted that some of the most bitter statements made about the Service came from the long-time residents.

Several interesting sub-groups were noted among the respondents. These groups were defined ex post facto; that is, they were not classified into groups before the interviews because of any known information about them but were grouped on the basis of their statements. For example, among the total group of interviewees several questioned during the first part of the study mentioned that they were "growing trees" or were "tree farmers." During the latter part of the study an attempt was made to

determine if the interviewee was engaged in tree farming. A total of 72 residents indicated that they were actively engaged in growing trees to some extent. (These respondents were obtained during approximately the last quarter of the time spent interviewing. Thus, no generalization of the total number of interviewees engaged in such activity should be attempted.) Of this sub-group of tree farmers, 67 were classified as giving responses favorable to the Forest Service. The five dissidents were a farmer whose trees were already planted before he acquired the farm, three tenants who felt their lot would be bettered if the land were converted to use that would produce a quicker yield, and one owner who stated that the ranger had given him "bum advice" on what trees to sell and when (he quoted as his authority the statements of a forester for a nearby private concern).

Another sub-group among the respondents was composed of those who had sold timber in the past three years. Of the 43 people interviewed who were determined to have sold timber (19 of the 43 were classified above as tree farmers), 40 were found to be in the group expressing favorable opinions toward the Forest Service. The three members of this group who held unfavorable opinions were the previously mentioned person who felt that the ranger had given him "bum advice" on which trees to sell and two others who felt that they had not received a fair price for the timber they had sold. These latter individuals failed to make clear to the interviewer the manner in which the Forest Service was connected with the allegedly low price received. Apparently there was no gradation of enthusiasm or opinion that was associated with the amount of timber sold. The individual who reported the lowest amount sold ($86.00) was just as enthusiastic about the Service as several who reported they had sold many times that amount.

One hundred twenty-eight respondents were classified as having neutral or mixed feelings toward the Service. The people placed in this category were those who stated that they "had no feelings," "are neither for nor against them," "have practically no contact with them," or some similar statement. Also placed in this category and composing over half of it were those who made more than one statement, some of which were favorable and some unfavorable. When asked to clarify their position, the latter group of people usually replied that they were unsure or undecided about how they felt regarding the Service.

No significant differences between the various ranger districts were noted in the number of people who appeared to be ambivalent toward the Service. However, the type of complaint did vary to some extent between the districts for this group and the group of unfavorable respondents.

In the Biloxi Ranger District one complaint was voiced to a much greater extent than in the other two districts. This complaint dealt with the acquisition of additional land. Over half of the people (25) interviewed in this District who were classed as neutrals mentioned the unavailability of land as one of their chief objections to the forest program. The typical statement was, "You can't buy any more land, and they won't swap any with us; we're hemmed in and there is no chance of ever growing or improving."

The interviewers were not familiar enough with the land situation to determine whether available land is actually scarcer in this District than in the other two. However, one fact was discovered that might be a factor in producing this situation. Of the group interviewed in the Biloxi District, forty-two families had one or more members of the family employed on the Gulf Coast or its immediate area. Eighteen of the

twenty-five "neutrals" who mentioned land scarcity had members of the family so employed. Such employment had led to a considerable bettering of the economic status of the family and the availability of money with which to purchase more land. Several interviewees frankly admitted the foregoing to be the case, and the statement "We've got more cash money coming in now than we've ever had but can't buy any land with it" was heard several times. Practically all respondents said that they knew of no private land that could be purchased. They maintained that everyone they knew wanted more land and would not sell any of what they had.

Nearly all the interviewees believe that this situation will become more pressing in the future, particularly if the new stock laws are really enforced. Several mentioned that they would have to sell their stock--or at least part of it--unless something could be done to make grazing land available.

This complaint was also voiced by several residents in each of the other districts, but not nearly so frequently. It was also mentioned several times by the group classified as unfavorable to the Forest Service, but for this group it appeared to be mainly a minor aspect of their feelings. The fact that the majority of respondents who voiced the complaint about the shortage of land were classified as neutrals is accounted for by the fact that they also had favorable things to say about the Service. In many cases the interviewer received the impression that the people had almost accepted the land shortage and felt that attempting to do anything about it was futile even though they definitely do not like the situation. While the complaint is rather widespread, the interviewers did not get the impression that feelings over this matter were so vehement as to cause overt retaliatory action against the Service.

By far the strongest feeling regarding the Service was encountered among those who were classified in the unfavorable category. The type of complaint did not differ between districts to a significant extent, although the proportion of interviewees placed in this category was somewhat less in the Biloxi District. The complaints that these people registered were varied and at times phrased in the strongest of terms.

The one thing that most of the unfavorable group had in common was a personal incident involving either the ranger or some other individual in the Forest Service. Eighty-one per cent of those in the unfavorable group had had some Forest Service regulation enforced in such a manner as to bring the individual into personal contact with the ranger and the Forest Service. Insofar as the interviewers could ascertain, all these incidents involved enforcement of regulations by Service personnel, and, in all cases except two, the resident was aware of the regulation before the infraction took place. It should be noted, however, that many of the individuals believed that selective enforcement of the regulations was being applied. In several cases, the interviewers mentioned other areas in which the same rules were supposed to apply, but it was claimed by them that they were not being enforced. This contention--and several variations of it--is apparently responsible in some cases for the individual feeling that "the ranger has it in for me."

Several members of the unfavorable group were discovered upon questioning to have had no personal trouble with Forest Service personnel. One of the things that these people had in common was that the majority of them represented relatively new arrivals to the forest area. Of further significance is the fact that their most immediate neighbors were also anti-Service. Although the evidence is not at all conclusive, it would

appear that new arrivals are definitely influenced in their attitudes toward the Service by their neighbors before they have had any personal contacts of their own. The neighbors' influence became apparent late in the study and could not be definitely checked, but several cases of the opposite type were discovered on subsequent investigation; i.e., new residents who lived in a community having favorable opinions toward the Service also held favorable opinions.

Several of the interviewees also claimed that many of the rules had been on the books for a long time but had never been enforced previously. They apparently felt that whether or not the regulation was enforced was a prerogative of the ranger. To support this latter idea, several interviewees in the two northern districts mentioned the periods of tenure of some former rangers who apparently had ignored many of the activities that were later prohibited. Only a few of the respondents accused the ranger of favoritism toward individuals in the community, but many did feel that the ranger "had it in for them" personally.

The most frequently mentioned grievance involved the use of the range for livestock feeding purposes. The problem encountered here is very similar to that stated by some of the residents classified as neutral but appears to be much more crucial to them in that very few of them see a remedy to the situation of land being made available for purchase. Their problem is not the availability of the land for purchase--only four mentioned that they would like to increase their holdings--but the maintenance of their livestock herds. Although no reliable economic index was attempted, in the interviewers' opinion more of the people in this classification are in a lower economic bracket than in either of the other opinion classifications.

Other complaints registered involved unfair treatment in employment practices by the Forest Service, the unavailability of timber from Federal lands for private use, and the claiming of land by the Service that the individual believed belonged to him or that he had had free use of formerly.

It was found to be extremely difficult to elicit any statement from these individuals that was in any way favorable toward the Forest Service or its program. If one attempted a general characterization of these people, it would be as follows: He has had one or more personal, unpleasant experiences with Forest Service personnel; he is wholeheartedly against the Service and does not seem likely to be easily changed; and he has no true understanding of the purpose of the Service but does have an amazing amount of misinformation about it.

"What could the Forest Service do to improve their relations with forest residents?"

The second question posed to all residents was, "What could the Forest Service do to improve their relations with forest residents?"

Thirty-one and two-thirds per cent of the respondents indicated that the Service was doing practically everything that could be expected or had no specific suggestion to make. Most of the people who gave this response were from the group that had been classified on the previous question as having favorable attitudes toward the Service. Thirty-one of the 140 in this group were from the neutral opinion category, and none in this group had been classified as having unfavorable opinion.

Although the word "education" was seldom used by the interviewees, many of their responses indicated that something of this type of program was what the respondent had in mind. The typical expression was "the people are going to have to learn" why and what the Service is doing, the importance and value of their work, or that things have changed and

what "used to be" will never return.

One of the respondents used an analogy to illustrate his point that the Service is doing all that could be expected and that the people will "learn" their value eventually. He stated the current climate in forestry is like the situation that developed years ago when they tried to make all the people in his area dip their cattle to stamp out the fever tick in cattle. Many of the people objected to this, and there were numerous cases of concrete dip pits being dynamited and other harassing actions being taken. It took some time for the people to find out that no matter how much trouble the dipping was, it was beneficial. When most of the public became sold on the idea, everybody else felt they had to go along with it. "They soon saw that it meant money in their own pockets. It is quite a bit harder for the Forest Service to show that their program means money to a man, but some of the people have learned it and more are beginning to find it out. When a majority of the people learn this, the Service is going to find their job much easier."

Slightly over two-thirds (68.33%) of the people who responded to this question made suggestions of action they would like to see taken. Although the intent of the question was to secure suggestions that would affect the entire forest population, it was obvious to the interviewers that in most cases the interviewees were answering the question from a personal frame of reference. Many respondents gave several answers to this question.

The most frequently mentioned courses of action were as follows: Forty-six persons mentioned that some better arrangement for the grazing of stock should be developed. This point is a crucial one with the residents. As one man put it, "They're taking the meat off of my table." There seems to be a feeling of being completely hemmed in with little

recourse. Another stated the problem in this way, "Nobody around here has enough land to graze what little stock we have, and everybody seems to be cutting down on the stock they keep. We can't get any more land, and they're making it harder to use their lands all the time. Especially hard hit is the hog man. If you let your hogs in for just a little while, they'll likely pen them up on you. Some people run the risk for short periods to give their hogs a chance to live."

The foregoing is typical of the statements made by this group. The idea of not having enough land, not being able to secure more land, and not being free to graze in the National Forests was repeated by several residents.

Several of the respondents who thought something should be done about the grazing were of the opinion that cattle do practically no damage to the forest and that the Forest Service greatly exaggerates the damage done by hogs. It was suggested several times that when the young trees reach a certain height livestock could graze and do no damage. They feel that with the proper planning some parts of the forest in each area could always be made available for grazing.

Twenty-four suggestions regarding employment practices were made. Curiously enough, the suggestions can be divided into two almost diametrically opposed groups: those who thought employment should be spread around more among the residents and those who thought that employees working on a part-time basis should have steadier work or at least more assurance of continued employment. Typical of these in the first group were several residents who insisted that employment was given only to those individuals who were favorites of the ranger or man in charge. These people steadfastly maintained that ability or amount of

work accomplished had nothing to do with who was employed. Individuals in the second group insisted that they never knew how long they would be employed by the Forest Service and that while they were happy to work they sometimes could not plan ahead because of not knowing how long their job would last.

Another suggestion, made by eighteen respondents, was that local people be given more of a chance, or at least an equal opportunity, in bidding for the timber to be sold by the Forest Service. The majority of this group claimed that the Service definitely favored the "big boys" or "outsiders" in selling timber. Many insisted they were not even aware that the timber was to be sold until some "foreign outfit" came in and started cutting. They believe that local people could remove the trees with less damage to other property and that the money would stay in the community. Three of the respondents stated that there was nothing the Forest Service could do to improve their relations with residents that would be more beneficial than giving local people an "even break" in this matter.

The question of availability of land arose again in response to this question. Sixteen respondents stated that if the Forest Service would sell or swap land with them so that they could increase or consolidate their holdings it would improve relations considerably.

SECTION III

FOREST FIRES

This section of the report is concerned with the attitudes and opinions of the forest residents toward the problem of forest fires. The interviewer made an effort to secure as much information from the interviewee as possible before the subject of forest fires was introduced. In 55.8% of the interviews the subject of forest fires was introduced directly by the interviewee; in another 25.7% the subject arose amid responses to other questions; and in the remaining 18.5% of the interviews it was necessary for the interviewer to introduce the subject.

Immediately after the introduction of the subject of forest fires, the interviewer began his series of questions on fires. This procedure was followed because it had been discovered that many interviewees appeared to respond better when it appeared that the subject had arisen as a natural consequence of the conversation.

"What causes most forest fires?"

The first question put to the residents was, "What causes most forest fires?" The following table represents a tabulation of the first responses given. The number of responses reported exceeds the number of interviews conducted because in some cases multiple responses such as "hunters and lightning" were given and in other cases when more than one person was present at the interview the respondents differed in the reasons given.

Cause of fires	Number	%
Lightning	60	15
Hunters	36	9
Cigarettes, smokers	44	11
Loss of control	128	32
Set on purpose	116	29
Don't know or no opinion	16	4
Total	400	100

Many of the respondents volunteered information as to how the named cause contributed to fires. When no explanation was volunteered, the interviewer simply asked how.

All those whose initial answer was "lightning" used thunderstorms unaccompanied by heavy rains as an explanation. However, eight of these respondents offered the further explanation that "heat lightning," "summer lightning," or "dry weather lightning" could be responsible for fires even though there were no thunderstorms and no one saw bolts striking the ground. None of the people were clear as to the mechanics by which the event occurred, but all could cite cases in which they had seen fires follow this type of lightning.

Six of those who named hunters as the cause could offer no specific example except general carelessness with no further explanation. Twenty-two in this category stated that hunters let their cooking or warming fires get out of hand or just went off and left them when they were through. Eight individuals stated that hunters would purposely start fires in a "draw" or "ravine" to flush the game out. Although it was not recorded originally, the statements above frequently contained references to "city hunters" or "city sports" in describing the actions of hunters responsible for fires. A check was made of the last nine people who gave this reason, and in six of the cases the hunters were referred to as city, town, or outside hunters. These people evidently wanted to exempt local people specifically from the practice. /These nine interviews were all conducted in the Leaf River District./

All people who responded that cigarettes were a cause were placed in this category no matter what source they named for the cigarette throwing. Twenty-three mentioned cigarettes thrown from automobiles,

thirteen mentioned cigarettes from hunters, and eleven mentioned cigarettes from people working in the forest, including Forest Service personnel.

The largest category was composed of those who stated that the fires were started unintentionally through accident or by allowing set fires to get out of control. Of the 128 people making this response, eighty (62.5%) stated that the forest fire was usually the result of the rapid spread of a fire that was intended to burn only in a certain area. /Several interviewees referred to "woods fires" spreading and developing into "forest fires."/ Some interviewees mentioned that this source of forest fires could be lessened if more people knew the right way to "run a burn" or to "control burn." Thirty-eight individuals (29.6%) mentioned another type of accidental source. These respondents gave as sources the burning of trash and brush piles (30), stills (6), and wash pot fires (2).

The "set on purpose" category is distinguished from the other categories by the intent attributed to the instigator of the fire. The only responses placed in this category were those in which the respondent indicated that the starter of the fire did so without regard to the amount to be burned, without the right to do so, on the property of another, or with intent to do damage or create a nuisance. One hundred and sixteen responses (29% of the total) were placed in this category. Of this number, sixty-six indicated that the motivation of the burners was to clear rough and destroy ticks, snakes, etc. Thirty of the respondents indicated that this source of fires was the result of people's dissatisfaction with the Forest Service and represented retaliatory measures. This latter group of fire starters were quite often characterized by the respondents as "sore-heads." Fourteen

respondents said the fires were started in order to "get even" with certain individual property owners. Although the motive for this group is similar to that of the preceding one, it is listed as a separate group since the action was spoken of in the context of being against private property owners rather than against the Forest Service. Four respondents reported the fires were the result of activities of pyromaniacs. Two stated that Forest Service personnel started fires in order to assure themselves of jobs. In both of these cases, the respondents made it clear that it was permanent personnel and not part-time local employees to which they were referring.

The final tabulation for this question was of those whose first response was that they had no opinion on what caused fires. The sixteen people who responded in this manner were reticent throughout the interview, and six of these terminated the interview when the subject of fires was introduced. In every case for these six interviewees it was necessary for the interviewer to introduce the subject of fires. Four of this group refused to answer in any way and would not even hazard a guess" when urged to do so by the interviewer. Three others stated they had not lived in the area long enough to be familiar with the causes of the local fires. The remaining three of this group intimated they had some suspicion of the interviewer. They made statements similar to "I expect you know more about that than me."

"What's the next most frequent cause?"

A tabulation of the second mentioned cause by each respondent yielded the following table. The stimulus question in this case was, "What's the next most frequent cause?"

Second mentioned cause	Number	%
Lightning	76	20
Hunters	21	5.5
Cigarettes, smokers	95	25
Loss of control	136	35.8
Set on purpose	52	13.7
Total	380	100.0

/Note: The total is 380 in this case rather than 400 due to the 16 non-respondents reported in the preceding table and 4 cases in which the interviewer did not record a second response./

An analysis of a partial cross tabulation that was conducted shows some rather interesting patterns between first and second responses. Eighty (68.9%) of the respondents whose first answer was "set on purpose" shifted to the "loss of control" category. Forty of those who first reported "loss of control" shifted to the "set on purpose" category, thus accounting for 76.9% of those in this category in the second tabulation. The remaining categories distributed their changes in a relatively even pattern, although the "cigarettes" category did substantially increase.

"What could be done to stop forest fires that result from the action of people?"

Responses to this question were received from 442 individuals. In these cases in which more than one person was interviewed at a time, several of the interviewees often had nothing to contribute to some questions. However, as the interview progressed, they often "warmed up" and seemed quite eager to contribute. This question, which came after the warm-up period, seemed to attract most individuals, and thus the number of individuals reported is higher than for some other questions. However, mere affirmation of another's opinion was not counted as a separate response.

The tabulation was as follows:

Action suggested	Number	%	
Better education of population			
Value of forest	90	20.4)	
Program and purpose of Forest Service	65	14.7)	43.2
Fire management	36	8.1)	
More tree farmers	61	13.8	
Better public relations			
Fair timber sales	21	4.7)	
Pay taxes	46	10.4)	
Fair employment practices	39	8.8)	35.6
Make land available	12	2.7)	
Protection of private land	16	3.6)	
Stop taking up livestock	24	5.4)	
Better police action	32	7.2	

The categories in the above table are not necessarily mutually exclusive. They represent an attempt to organize the remarks under the heading that the interviewer believed the content and manner of speaking of the interviewee indicated. In many cases the respondents, while suggesting a line of action that would have a favorable influence on other people, revealed that he had no true conception of the function of the Service himself.

Value of the forest

The largest category formed by replies to this question was composed of remarks that dealt with convincing the people of the value of the forests to the community. Ninety people mentioned the fact that, in general, the forest residents do not realize the value to themselves, that they see the forest as the property of the government or of someone else, and that they do not realize how much money they receive indirectly from the forest. As one man put it, "They think the only money they get from the forest comes from working in it. They don't realize that there wouldn't be any cash jobs around here if it weren't for the forest."

The consensus of these people seemed to be that if all the residents could be made to realize that a forest fire costs everyone, the number of such fires would decrease.

When asked if they thought the people had a greater appreciation of the forest now than in the past, eighty replied that they believed so, but in most cases added that it still was not as much as it should be.

When questioned as to how they thought people could best be taught the value of the forest, the ninety individuals in this category replied as follows:

	Number	%
More signs	9	10
School program	9	10
Beat supervisors	21	23
Community leaders	12	13
Forest Service	27	30
Miscellaneous	4	4
Don't know	8	9

The nine interviewees who stated that more signs would help said they believed that signs had had a lot of effect in the past. Three of these people suggested that the signs in an area should be changed each year to indicate the present value of the timber to the community.

Nine other individuals mentioned school programs as a means of informing the younger generation. Four of these people stated that a program of this sort was once in operation but had been dropped.

Thirty-three people mentioned that prominent persons in the community have influence on the beliefs of others. These people are reported in two separate categories (Beat Supervisors, 21; Community Leaders, 12) because when asked to identify the type of person they meant they most often named the supervisor.

Of the twenty-one who named the supervisor as one of great influence, nearly all (17) gave as the reason for his influence the employment practices used. The typical statement was, "Nearly all the people who most need to appreciate the value of the forest, work for the supervisor at some time during the year. These jobs mean a lot to those people, and if you can get the supervisor to pass the word on about forests, it will do a lot of good." One man interviewed went so far as to say that if the supervisors were really against the firing of woods, most of it would be stopped.

Those who mentioned community leaders as influential used as their reason in eight cases the fact that these people "set good examples" for the community. Three others used as their reason the large number of tenants living on land owned by the leaders. The remaining member of this group named a community leader who owned a lot of land and then qualified his nomination by stating that "he doesn't have much contact with the plain people."

Program and purpose

Sixty-five persons stated that the people need to know more about the program and purpose of the Service. Thirty-six of this number were unable to specify examples of precisely the kind of information that should be given to the residents except to insist that a lot of people do not understand the basic purpose of the Service.

Nine of this group mentioned that people seem unable to distinguish between the purposes of the Forest Service and the purposes of the men who manage large areas for private companies. One man stated that they seem to feel that the Forest Service is virtually working for or managing the area for large companies. This idea was confirmed in subsequent interviews.

Sixteen respondents mentioned the confusion that exists between the Federal and State governments in the minds of the people. Most typical of this was the belief on the part of people that they are paying a "fire tax" to the government. The belief that they are paying a "fire tax" to support a group that uses this money and then refuses to give them protection on this private land was cited as a major source of irritation.

Four people stated that the people needed to know more about the personnel and hiring systems of the Service. They cited the fact that many people believed the rangers were politically appointed and objected to outsiders getting the job.

Fire management

Thirty-six individuals believed that if the people who hunt in, work in, or live in the forest area could be taught to take care of fires that start or to control their burn properly, much of the fire danger would be lessened. Twenty-four mentioned the training of hunters and workers, and twelve thought that the training of residents in the proper manner of conducting controlled burns would be most fruitful.

More tree farmers

Sixty-one people suggested that if the number of tree farmers could be increased the fire danger would be decreased. The most popular reason, stated by 41 of the respondents, was that when a man has a personal stake in some trees he gets very interested in keeping fires down. The remaining 20 gave virtually the same reason but offered further evidence for their argument by citing cases in which tree farmers had also put pressure on their neighbors to be more careful with their burns and, in some cases, had helped conduct them.

Better public relations

Many of the people whose responses placed them in this category could have also been regarded in the "educational group," but because their answers were in the nature of a "gripe" they were placed in the present category. All of the people in this category seemed to interpret the question as pertaining to fires started in order to harass the Forest Service or for the purpose of damaging property. Accordingly, the reports given were nearly all couched in terms of what the Service could do to create better feeling and thus stop retaliatory fires.

The distribution of responses was as follows:

Better public relations	Number	%
Fair timber sales	21	13
Pay taxes	46	29
Fair employment procedure	39	25
Make land available	12	8
Protection of private land	16	10
Stop taking up livestock	24	15
Total	158	100

The twenty-one individuals who reported the need for improvement in sales procedures all claimed that discrimination was practiced by the Forest Service. They believe that the "little man" is not given a chance in many cases and that the best and biggest contracts are given to the larger companies. A typical statement was, "The government won't sell just a little timber to a local man. They sell one or two sections to an out-of-state company, and they come in and ruin more timber than they take out. They take the timber out of the state, and where does that leave us local people?" Several respondents said that selling to local people helped everyone in the community as local labor was used to cut the timber, local truckers to haul, and all other parts of the operation were done by local people, thus keeping the money there.

Forty-six individuals indicated that they thought the Service should "have to pay taxes like the rest of us" or like the large private companies. Sixteen of this number did not make direct statements of the foregoing type but indicated that some people were unhappy because their taxes were higher as a result of the untaxed forest land. While this entire group might reasonably have been placed in the "education" category, they are included in the present category since there is apparently more than an educational problem involved. This belief arises from the fact that no responses of this type were received in the area of the University of Mississippi Forest Lands, and this operation neither pays taxes nor contributes a percentage of its sales to the county.

Thirty-nine interviewees stated that if the Forest Service were fair in its employment procedures, a lot of the ill will that presently causes trouble would not arise. /Four other people voiced a complaint regarding employment, but because of the nature of their remarks they were categorized in the "education" section./ Twenty-one of this group felt that jobs were not "passed around" enough; that some individuals who were no better workers than they were had what appeared to be permanent jobs with the Service. Eleven individuals complained of the uncertainty of the length of employment. These people cited several cases in which people quit their original jobs and went to work for the Service only to be laid off after a short period of work. A typical statement was, "They hire and fire as they want to, and it doesn't matter if a man is working hard, they fire him anyway." Seven interviewees, all Negroes, stated that Negroes had no chance of being hired and that all jobs went to white people.

Several of the people reported in the foregoing paragraph stated that they had heard of times when people who were fired went out to get even and started a few fires. The people in this group seemed to feel that

employment procedures were the key to set fires.

Twelve people felt that making land available for purchase would solve much of the present trouble. Seven stated that if a person could get enough land of his own to handle his cattle, it would not be necessary to burn government land to make it acceptable to his cattle. Five of these individuals talked about making land available in connection with "the new fence law the Forest Service got passed." All of these people predicted that things were going to get worse because of the new law.

Sixteen individuals stated that they could not get any help from the Forest Service in protecting their own land when fires threatened their property. Four members of this group stated that sometimes Dantzler would help but only if the fire became a real threat to Dantzler land. It was mentioned that some people, after their own land had burned, would threaten to burn just as much government land.

In connection with the above, it was difficult for the interviewer to ascertain what governmental group was being reported. Evidently there is considerable confusion between State and Federal services. One man who seemed fairly well informed made the following statement, "In my opinion the tax we have to pay for fire protection is the most useless tax we pay for anything. After one bad fire I went to the County Agent to find out what to do if it happened again, and he didn't know. At a meeting of Forestry people over at Woolmarket I asked whom to call and even the Forestry people didn't know."

/Note: In connection with the identification of services, a small survey of twenty-five people was made. All of these people owned land bordering on government land. Eighteen were able to distinguish correctly between Federal and State services insofar as fire fighting was concerned.

Of the twenty-five interviewed, eleven were sure that they were paying a "fire tax." Three of these eleven thought they paid it to the Forest Service, four thought it was paid to the County, and four thought it went to the State./

Twenty-four people reported that one reason people started fires was to get even with the ranger for taking up their livestock. Only two of this group stated that they knew of cases in which the owner was unaware of the rules concerning grazing and had violated the rule unintentionally. Eighteen of the twenty attributed most cases in which the stock was taken up by the Service to their being in the Forest accidentally after having escaped their owner's care. The remaining two reported cases they knew of in which the owner knew the chance he was taking but did it anyhow. All of the people interviewed stated that the taking up of stock by the Forest Service caused the most bitter feeling that they knew of toward the Service.

Better police action

Thirty-two persons responded that the only way to stop set fires was by catching more people who engaged in such activity. However, only seven of this group said that culprits should be jailed when caught. Nine thought that they should be fined, and the remaining sixteen stated that they should be punished but would not specify the manner. When these latter sixteen were asked if the individuals should be jailed, the usual reply was that it would be a hardship on the man's family to do so. When asked about fines, they usually claimed that most people who set fires are not the ones who have any money. Their attitude seems to be "they ought to be punished," but they aren't willing to see the people jailed or fined.

SECTION IV

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION GATHERED

Throughout the study some statements were made frequently enough by interviewees to indicate that the opinions expressed were worthy of consideration. These statements were gratuitously offered in many of the early interviews, and many were not recorded. However, during the periodic conferences held by the interviewers, discussion of the interviews frequently revealed statements that were occurring often enough to warrant recording. After the decision was made to record a certain statement, the interviewer would include a question designed to elicit a response on the matter if the statement did not arise voluntarily. For these reasons, the number of responses to each question to be reported varies considerably. The statements made previous to the decision to start recording are not included in the totals since in these instances there was no chance for a negative reply to be recorded.

Characteristics of woods burners

In response to a question of the type: "Who or what kind of people do the most burning?" two responses greatly outnumbered all others. Of the fifty-one people approached on this matter, forty-two (82.4%) ascribed the burning to "those who have quite a few cattle." Eight of these respondents characterized the individuals responsible for the burning as those with "too many" cattle. Further questioning revealed that by "too many" the respondents meant any number of cattle that were likely to produce a feeding problem to the owner. When queried as to the purpose of this burning, all interviewees gave substantially the same answer: "To clear the brush so that grass will grow better and can be more easily reached by the livestock and to keep the ticks and snakes down." The foregoing

responses should be interpreted in relation to the responses reported in Section III in the "set on purpose" category, in which sixty-six respondents are recorded as having reported similar reasons.

Thirty of the fifty-one (58.82%) characterized the people who do the burning as "the old timers, the older people who are set in their ways and who don't know the value of the forest." There was no discernible age pattern among those who gave this response. Both respondents who were obviously beyond middle age and those who were apparently in their early twenties gave this response. All of these people described the burning practices being followed by the people they were describing as "old fashioned and of little use now." Sixteen of the interviewees admitted that in the past they had burned every year but now realized it was not absolutely necessary and that the possible damage greatly outweighed the good accomplished. Six of the thirty described the older practices as foolish because "people have learned that livestock do better in the rough." Four mentioned the damage done to "mud cane" on which cattle thrive and the fact that it takes more than a year for it to reach useful growth after being burned. The remaining four made no comment against the practice.

During the discussion that was engendered by the foregoing question, several respondents indicated that they still believe burning produces better grass but stated they were "going along" with the Forest Service. Two individuals claimed to have made tests that indicated the grass <u>did</u> grow better following a burn.

Obviously these characteristics are only a few of the many that could be used to describe individuals who engage in woods burning. These characteristics were mentioned in this report only because of

the frequency with which they were volunteered by interviewees.

Characteristics of tree farmers

One of the methods suggested by interviewees as a possible deterrent to man-caused fires was to get more people started in tree farming. Sixty-one people (13.8% of the total interviewed) suggested this method. In order to gain some information about those engaged in tree farming, several questions were asked of people who identified themselves as tree farmers. This idea did not arise until later in the study, so the information reported is based upon only twenty-two interviews. /The interviewers had no definitive method of identifying a tree farmer. The people on whom these remarks are based classified themselves by responding positively to the question, "I've seen a lot of signs around some places that say 'Tree Farm'; do you do any tree farming?"/

While most of the following information is subjective in nature, in that the actual figures were seldom obtained, it represents impressions on which all interviewees agreed.

(a) Those people interviewed who were tree farmers were older than the average interviewee in twenty-one cases. Nearly all of the tree farmers appeared to the interviewers to be fifty or more years of age.

(b) They were operators and/or owners of larger amounts of acreage than the average interviewee. While the number of acres owned was not included as one of the interview questions, the interviewee frequently volunteered the information or revealed considerable holdings by his references to different 40's that he owned or various spreads of land.

(c) They nearly all wished to purchase more land. Sixteen of those interviewed indicated that they wished to purchase more land but could find none available. It is interesting to note that in twelve of the

sixteen cases the farmers stated that the lack of availability was due to the Forest Service or "the big companies." Only half (6) of these indicated that they had made any attempt to purchase from private land owners in the area. Eight of the tree farmers indicated that the land was desired to expand their tree farming operation, and four stated that they wished the land for their sons or other members of the family so they could be "close to home." Five of the group stated that money made from selling trees was a large factor in their ability to purchase more land.

(d) Most (14) described fire protection as improving but inadequate. The main fear of the tree farmers is damage or destruction of their crop by fire. Only four of the total group mentioned insurance, and they were unanimous in their opinion that rates were prohibitive. In every case they voiced the opinion that set fires were of much greater concern than those that could be attributed to natural or accidental causes. Only three of the respondents mentioned the possibility of "vengeance" fires, while the rest feared the spread of fires from adjoining neighbors' efforts to burn. The interviewees were about evenly divided on the question of whether or not it was an advantage to a tree farmer to have his land adjoin the National Forest area. Three stated that there was actually a greater amount of danger as there were more fires in the government-owned area than in privately-owned woods.

(e) When asked what could be done to interest more people in tree farming, the respondents failed to offer any advice. Most insisted that more people should be interested and would become so if they were able to see the ultimate gains. In connection with this latter point, thirteen of the respondents indicated that one of the major difficulties in getting more people into tree farming is in selling the idea to the younger people.

Statements such as "They don't want to wait over a year for their money" or "The younger farmers can't see past the ends of their noses when it comes to trees" were made. Four other interviewees made similar statements but indicated that most of the younger people were having a harder time making a living and doubted that they could be interested in tree farming until they "get on their feet."

These people believe that if more people can become involved in tree farming, the fire hazard will be reduced in two ways: (1) People who have something at stake will be more careful in their own burning practices, and (2) if enough people become tree farmers in an area, they can bring pressure (undefined by interviewees but believed to be social and economic in nature) on others to cease hazardous practices.

The new fence law

In the first section of this report the opinions of long-time residents of the forest area were reported. Over one-fifth of the people interviewed expressed the opinion that relations with the Forest Service were of a poorer order at the present time than in the past. When asked to amplify their statements, many quoted incidents that had happened involving the Forest Service that subsequent conversations revealed to have occurred several years before. In several cases the responses of these interviewees were of such a nature as to indicate that they were better informed and, in a few cases, more sympathetic to the functions of the Forest Service than the population in general. No responses to direct questions are available to substantiate the foregoing; it merely represents a consensus that resulted from review sessions conducted by the supervisor of the study with the interviewers during the course of the study.

The interviewers all had the feeling that there was something unreliable about the way the people were responding in that they did not display a general attitude toward the Forest Service that was consistent with the way in which they responded to the question regarding relations with the Service. A search of each interviewer's notes led the interviewers to the conclusion that concern over the recently enacted "fence law" might be a contributing factor to their opinion that "relations are getting worse." There are no data to substantiate this conclusion to an acceptable degree since the observations were not based upon systematic notes.

Ten residents of the Biloxi Ranger District who expressed the opinion that conditions were getting worse were asked questions about the new fence law. Four of the interviewees stated that they were unalterably opposed to it. Three stated that they had known it was coming eventually and thought that the basic idea might be good but that they should have had more warning and time to comply with it. Two stated that they believed the law would only cause trouble and would not solve the problem; they were against it but had no choice except to comply. One respondent refused to make any statement concerning the fence law.

Six of the above ten identified the fence law with the Forest Service either directly or by saying that the Service "pushed" for the law or was in some way partly responsible for it. All of the four enumerated above as being unalterably opposed to the law were among these six.

While the above data do not in any sense prove the hypothesis that the fence law was partly responsible for the adverse opinions held, they do indicate that the time at which this survey was made might have been inappropriate insofar as getting a true estimate of resident opinion is concerned.

Ten people, also in the Biloxi Ranger District, who thought that relations had improved were queried concerning the fence law with the following results: Two were unalterably opposed; three stated that they would have to wait and see what effects took place before making a statement of opinion; two said that they guessed the law was necessary, but it should not have been forced upon them and that people would eventually fence their land anyhow; and three stated they were in favor of the law.

Five of the Biloxi District group identified the law as being to some extent the responsibility of the Forest Service in the same manner as the group previously reported.